

## **NRCS Lends a Helping Hand to a Montour County Property**

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**June 29, 2012**

Tropical Storm Lee and Hurricane Irene damaged many properties in Montour County by last fall. With the help of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), over 150 projects in the Commonwealth will receive assistance to stabilize streams and repair imminent threats to life and property. One such project site is Judy Brandt's home near Catawissa, PA. Donald Murray NRCS' Bloomsburg project engineer states, "the erosion of the stream bank was so severe that the foundation of Brandt's house was exposed which placed it in imminent danger if another severe storm was to take place."

The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program was passed by Congress to help protect individuals and properties endangered by natural disasters. In Pennsylvania, this program is being used to alleviate imminent hazards to life and property caused by an unexpected impairment of the watershed such as erosion and flooding following Tropical Storm Lee and Hurricane Irene.

The construction on Ms. Brandt's property began around April 23, 2012 and was completed just two-and-a-half weeks later on May 11, 2012. To stabilize the streambank and protect the home, local workers grouted the lower half of the stream bank with a sand/cement mixture and steel dowels in order to make the bank larger and add extra stability to keep it in place. They also installed riprap (rocks) to prevent further erosion.

With the construction cost being nearly \$100,000, NRCS provided Brandt with 75 percent of the funding and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contributed the remaining 25 percent of the funds. Local organizations, including Mayberry Township and Montour County, the project sponsor, also provided project assistance. With substantial help from these entities, Ms. Brandt and her downstream neighbors can breathe easier, knowing that her house and their properties are further protected in the event of another storm. NRCS takes pride in helping people help the land. To learn more about our services, contact your local USDA Service Center, or visit [www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov).



Before: The stream bank in the back of Judy Brandt's property was severely eroded by flooding from Hurricane Irene last fall.



After: Through its emergency watershed protection program, NRCS and local partners stabilized the stream bank to prevent further erosion.